time to remove the samovars and asterisked books. After a guided tour through the prison, the superintendent would invite the inspector to the administration club. A chorus of balalaika players—common criminals—would be summoned to the evening party, and in the midst of the celebration the superintendent would find time to phone the chief guard. "Return the samovars to the politicals!"

Prison food was insufficient but we were permitted to supplement the ration by purchasing foodstuffs in the prison canteen. In our room the prisoners pooled all the money they received from home so that we had a budget of some ninety rubles a month, a ruble and a half (seventy-five cents) per person. Laundry, soap, tooth paste, postage, needles and thread took more than half the budget. The rest—fifteen kopeks per week per person—was spent for tea, sugar, and improvement of food on Wednesdays and Fridays. Our ward was proud of this system of budgeting—a "complete commune."

Along with complete or partial community of budget, all the political wards had an arrangement for distributing work among the inmates. Each person had definite responsibilities: sweeping, washing dishes, cutting bread. My responsibility was lecturing—a lecture each Saturday on any subject I chose. Actually, many lectures stretched over two or three evenings, and some weeks I lectured nearly every day—mainly on economic theory. The acoustics in the ward were bad and I had to force my voice to be heard by everyone, including the guards who pressed against the grille, but I always found before me a mug of hot sweetened tea to ease my throat. Sugar was rationed in the commune—one lump no larger than a joint of one's little finger per person per day—but usually one of the listeners would drop his ration into my mug.

Several times our ward arranged debates on controversial issues. I recall a long discussion on the problem of national minorities in Russia in which I was completely eclipsed by a shy Jewish boy. He told the story of the Jewish labor movement in a small town in one of the western provinces, the ghetto of Tsarist Russia. His name was Khanin, and later I met him in New York as one of the leaders of Jewish American labor.

Again, as in the tower, I felt an urge for theoretical work. The work on my lectures led me to examine the origin of basic concepts of political economy and their interpretation by different schools. I prepared a series of talks on this subject and wrote them down in book form.[1]

One of my most vivid memories of the Alexandrovsk penitentiary

[1] I sent the manuscript, of some one hundred sixty pages, to a St. Petersburg publisher, who gave it for review to an expert in Marxist theory. The latter lost the manuscript.